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Sri Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram - Chant in praise of Lord Vishnu

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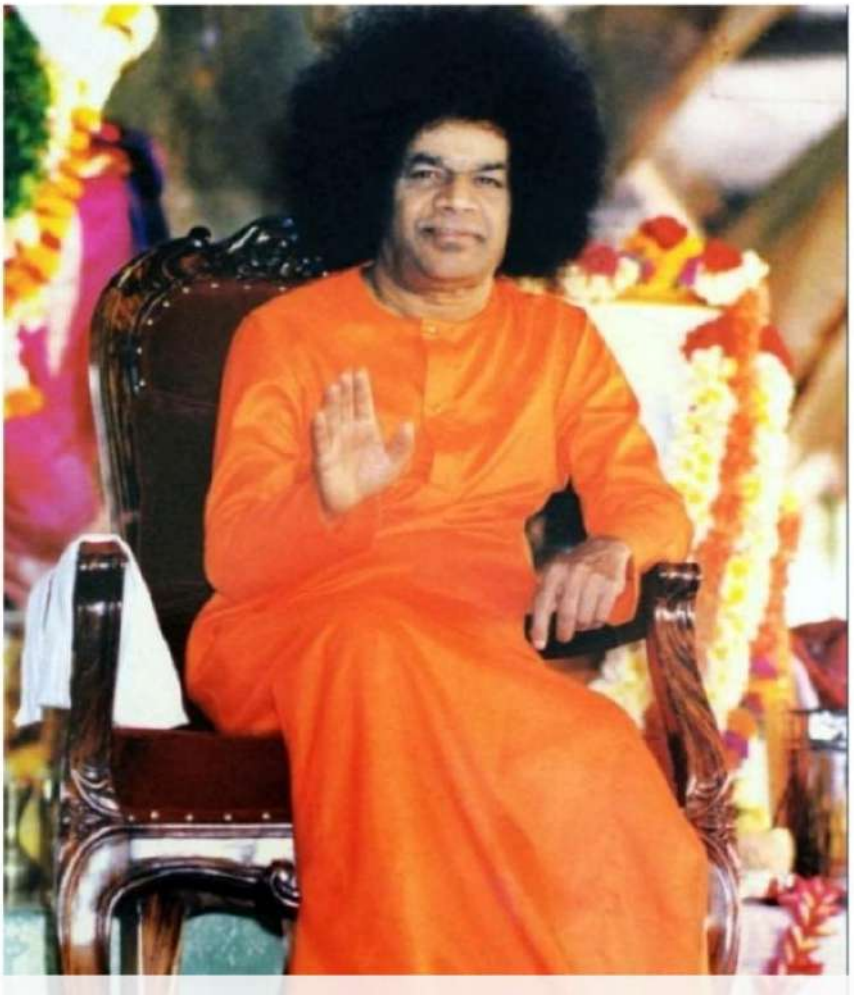
DEDICATION

This work is lovingly dedicated at the lotus feet of:
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



There is only ONE caste -The Caste of Humanity
There is only ONE religion –The Religion of Love
There is only ONE language –The Language of the Heart
There is only ONE God –He is Omnipresent

……Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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PREFACE

This free ebook gives briefly the info about Sri Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram - chant in praise of Lord Vishnu.
Background of Vishnu Sahasranamam, Yudhistira's six questions, meaning, why is it powerful, how to chant, benefits of Chanting, why 1008 names, interpretations, quotes, commentaries by Acharyas..etc.
Links to YouTube videos give the chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram by M S Subbulakshmi and also by others .

Acknowledgements:

Many of my friends and relatives have actively encouraged me in my attempt to compile this free ebook. I sincerely thank them for their support.

My wife Kala has always encouraged and supported me in all my literary works, sacrificing much of her time. I express my deep appreciation to her.

I have drawn heavily from many references, websites, YouTube videos etc as mentioned in text.

Finally, I express my immense gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai Baba for His Grace and blessings, prompting me to initiate, continue and complete this work.

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Vishnu Sahasranamam and its unique meanings

The Vishnu Sahasranamam is an ancient holy Vedic hymn containing one thousand names of Lord Vishnu. The Vishnu Sahasranamam, commonly chanted as a stotram, includes these names arranged across 107 stanzas. Lord Vishnu, also known as MahaVishnu or Narayana, protects and preserves the Universe.

The general depiction is that He rests on the king of snakes named Kalswarup Seshnag, with his consort, Goddess Laxmi, sitting by his side. Devotion towards Lord Vishnu and worshipping Him brings inner peace, success, and detachment to the devotee. Each name in the Sahasranamam has a profound meaning and refers to a particular characteristic, quality, or attribute of Lord Vishnu.

The purpose of chanting these names is to invoke a sense of bonding and love with the Lord. Each meaning gives us insight, understanding, and depth into the nature of God.

In a Sahasranamam, there is a deep connection between the name and the named, i.e., Lord Vishnu in this case. You'll notice that some words repeat twice or more. However, their significance differs hence chanted as part of the hymn.

In addition to the specific meaning of each name of Sri Vishnu, the phonetic vibrations also play a significant role if a seeker wants to chant this powerful hymn.

Vibrations are produced by chanting each name, also known as Nama, and subsequently the chain of consecutive names, known as Namavali. These energy vibrations are essential for bonding, one-pointed focus, insight, wisdom, realisation, and true perception of Lord Vishnu.

As Om Swami describes, while talking about self-realisation, the entire goal of human life is to merge into the universal consciousness and become liberated, which is what the first verse of the Vishnu Sahasranamam means. We eulogise the Lord through this hymn, chanting it as Sahasranamam.

When an individual is close and has deep bonds with another person, they usually give them various names lovingly. The same applies to Divine love and worship. The idea is that when a seeker drowns in devotional sentiment for their deity, they chant the various names of the Lord out of gratitude and love to understand Him better and communicate with Him.

"*Praying is your method of connecting with him, and Grace is His method of connecting with you. When you call and say 'hello,' that is praying; when He answers back, that is grace; sometimes, He calls back later." ~ Om Swami, os.me*

Additionally, prayers are a means for self-purification and mental cleansing when chanted with sincerity and devotion.

The importance of chanting Sri Vishnu Sahasranama is that the worshipping deity is none other than Vasudeva, the sustainer of the Universe, who only wants what's best for us.

The First Version of Vishnu Sahasranama

King Yudhisthira approached his grandsire Mahamana Bhishma after the war of Mahabharat was over, seeking answers to spiritual questions:

1. Who is the Lord of this Universe? Who is the ultimate refuge of a human?
2. What is the way to attain the ultimate state of purity?
3. Whom should we call out to – to set us free from the shackles of this world?

It is then that, while lying on the bed of arrows, Mahamana Bhishma gave Yudhisthira the one thousand names of Lord Vishnu, now known as Vishnu Sahasranamam. There are numerous versions of Vishnu Sahasranamam, but the most commonly chanted ones are from Skanda Purana and Mahabharata.

Why is Vishnu Sahasranama powerful?

An essential part of our lives consists of us calling out to the divine. During hardships, pain, and sorrow, we pray to him and approach him with gratitude when we are happy, thanking him for all the grace showered on us.

Vishnu Sahasranamam is said to be so powerful that it is like dialling a direct call to God. So, for the devotees of Lord Vishnu and otherwise, Vishnu Sahasranamam's importance is evident, as the scriptures extensively mention its benefits.

Lord Krishna himself chanted Vishnu Sahasranamam (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu). He chanted it to calm down a destructive fire, and during the Dwapar Yug, when Kauravas were on the verge of defeating the Pandavas due to a potent weapon called the "Brahmastra," which when used in the war could have caused a lot of destruction.

How to chant the Vishnu Saharanamam?

Chanting the Vishnu Saharanamam gives immense peace to one's mind. One can chant as many times as one wishes to. The most popular ways are:

1. Mantra meditation (Japa),

2. Worship (Archana), or

3. Recitation (Parayana).

For an absolutely clear pronunciation, you can watch this beautiful video of beautiful Vishnu Sahsranama sung in the voice of Swami Vidyananda Om on the eve of live abhishekam done on Krishna Janmashtami.
Rejoice in seeing the abhishekam of Sri Hari done with utmost devotion and various unguents and other offerings such as water from Giri Ganga, cow's milk, yogurt, sandalwood water, honey, fragrant concoction, turmeric while the glorious chants of Vishnu Sahasranamam are recited in the background.

The most common way is through the daily recitation of one thousand names. If appropriately pronounced with a great bhava (devotional sentiment), Vishnu Sahasranamam can work wonders on an individual's overall spiritual, emotional, and material development.

The correct way to chant Vishnu Sahasranamam is by understanding the meaning of each name and internalising it. It is done by contemplating the name and evoking the feeling of love and devotion within one's heart.

Mindful recitation with devotion helps the devotee reap the immense benefits of Vishnu Sahasranamam. Mechanical recitation without devotional sentiment would not be as effective because Sahasranamam is a devotional eulogy.

It is perfectly okay to take breaks and learn the hymn slowly, as the primary purpose is to remain mindful and established in devotion during recitation. Hence, one should chant Lord Vishnu's names with devotion and concentration. It is a belief that one can attain salvation by doing so.

Such a holy bond between the devotee and Lord Vishnu, their deity, is the goal of all worship as stated by Lord Krishna Himself in the Bhagavad Gita:

"*But those who dedicate all their actions to Me, regarding Me as the Supreme goal, worshipping Me and meditating on Me with exclusive devotion, O Parth, I swiftly deliver them from the ocean of birth and death, for their consciousness is united with Me." ~ Bhagavad Gita, Verse 12.6-12.7*

Benefits of Chanting Vishnu Sahasranama

s.me
BENEFITS OF VISHNU SAHASRANAMA
01. ATTAIN SUCCESS IN LIFE
02. GOOD HEALTH, PROSPERITY, HAPPINESS
03. ATTAIN SALVATION
04. PROTECT FROM EVIL
05. ATTAIN PURITY OF THOUGHT, WORDS, AND DEEDS
06. INNER PEACE AND WISDOM

As per the slokas mentioned in Markandeya Puranam and other such texts, a householder who chants Vishnu Sahasranama daily will:

1. Attain success in life;

2. He will have more material wealth, more food and clothing, he will live for a long time possessing good health, and his mind will be cheerful.

3. A devotee who aims to attain salvation can achieve it through Vishnu Sahasranamam chanting.

4. It is also a belief that this hymn creates a protective shield around you and your family, protecting you from all evil.

Vishnu Sahasranamam calms our minds and gives our body and soul strength to face all the challenges in life. Various additional benefits come from the mindful recitation of this chant:

1. It removes all the obstacles from one's life and can help you get rid of your debts.

2. It makes you sanctimonious and virtuous throughout your life; hence one should ideally chant it daily.

3. Doing regularly with devotion and faith relieves the devotee from stress, sorrow, and pain.

4. It brings prosperity to the family.

5. Blessings of Lord Vishnu help one to understand the ultimate truth and walk the path of salvation.

6. Chanting Vishnu Sahasranama helps achieve inner peace and wisdom.

7. It deepens our devotion towards Lord Vishnu, especially by internalising each name.

8. Chanting this divine hymn removes the fear of death.

9. Regular practice makes one fearless, self-confident, and conquering evil thoughts.

10. It can help us attain purity of thought, words, and deeds.

11. The actual reality behind this Universe reveals itself to us.

12. As a result of chanting this hymn, we can negate all bondages and lead ourselves to liberation from the cycle of life & death

13. Since Vishnu Sahasranama helps us purify ourselves, our intentions become clear and pure, leading to attaining desires. However, as their devotion and love for the Divine

increases, true devotees naturally become so content that the fulfilment of their desires no longer remains a goal.

How to recite and pronounce the Vishnu Sahasranamam correctly?

As correct pronunciation is essential to create the right vibrations within us and connect with Lord Vishnu, a devotee should learn the correct way to pronounce the names in Vishnu Sahasranamam.

The very learned monk, Swami Vidyananda Om, the first disciple of Om Swami, goes through the intricate details and the right way to chant the Sahasranamam. Anyone who wishes to chant it will benefit significantly from this course which elaborates on and helps us to learn the Vishnu Sahasranamam.

You can also benefit from a sample giving you access to a free lesson from the Vishnu Saharasnamam course.

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Ref: trsiyengar.com

Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam

Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam is known as Sri Vishnusahasranamam contains 1008 Names of **Sri Mahavishnu**. This entire compiling was done after the Mahabharata war and Saint Vyasa Mahamuni wrote the entire versus with answers for the queries raised by respective personnel they were part of that time.

Every Name of **Sri Vishnu** has a meaning to it; quite apart – the phonetic vibrations by chanting each Name known as “**Nama**" and the chain of names known as “**Namavali**” produces very fantastic results of vibrations that are very essential for human knowledge and wisdom. What the phonetic sound vibrations create to the chanter or to the one who hears it is very well established by many eminent scholars. For attainment of spiritual liberation, one must involve himself/herself to the glories of the Lord Sri Mahavishnu, by reciting the entire slokas.

This not only strengthens the brain neuron chips but also emits the brain wave at a very conducive limit that can revibrate the energies into one’s own body. Besides, the thought and

thinking of a person can also be regulated to divine path. That's the exact value, which bring every Bhakta known as devotees of **Sri Maha Vishnu.**

The birth of Sri Vishnu Sahasra Nama – The 1008 Names of Sri Maha Vishnu.

The legend would have it that at the end of the epic Mahabharata war, Bhishmacharya was awaiting the sacred hour to depart from his physical body unto the lotus feet of the Lord. Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, was desperately looking for the answers to matters relating to Dharma and Karma. Lord Sri Krishna, who understood Yudhistira's uneasy mind, guided him to Bhishma to learn insight in to this precious knowledge. It is relevant to mention that Bhishma was acknowledged to be one of the twelve most knowledgeable people. The other eleven being Brahma , Narada , Siva , Subramanya , Kapila , Manu , Prahlada , Janaka , Bali, Suka and Yama .

As directed by the Lord, he meets Yudhisthira. At their meeting,

Yudhistira presented Bhishma with six questions.

1. kimEkam daivatam lokE?

Who is the greatest Lord in the world?

2. kim vaapyEkam parAyaNam?

Who is the one refuge of all?

3. stuvantam kam prApnuyuh mAnavah subham?

By glorifying whom, can man attain peace and prosperity?

4. kam arcanat prApnuyuh mAnavaah subham?

By worshipping whom can man reach auspiciousness?

5. kO dharmah sarva dharmANaam bhavatah paramO matah?

What is, in thy opinion, the greatest Dharma?

6. kim japam mucyatE jantur janma samsAra bandhanAth?

By doing Japa of what, can creatures go beyond the bonds and cycle of birth and death?

Bhishma responded by reciting the Vishnu Sahasranama

And reminded him that either by meditating on these names or by invoking the names through archana (Offering), our minds can be lifted to higher consciousness.

Indeed, such a long recital of nAmAs glorifying the Lord and His splendour is rare in the world. Yet a rational person is apt to question how mere words and their repetition can create such great power.. Just imagine for a moment that you are in an assembly, and the lecturer begins his talk with the word “boat”. You can at one grasp the image of a boat, and there is calmness of mind. Suddenly then, if someone in the assembly utters the word “snake”, will your calmness continue? It therefore follows that vak (utterance) and artha (meaning) together infuse a subtle energy either positively or negatively. The thousand naamas are storehouses of proven spiritual content that can easily uplift our minds. Indeed the expression NaMa is made up of Na for Naramandala and Ma for manas, our Mind. NaMa, the chanting of which helps to unite our nervous system and Mind.

The main body of Sri Vishnu Sahasranama consists of 107 stanzas which contain the one thousand names of Sri Maha Vishnu. Every one of the one thousand names is full of significance and refers to one particular guna (quality, characteristic, or attribute) of Paramatma. These names invoke a sense of bonding with the Lord. The meanings of the names give us an understanding and depth of God as there is a deep connection between the name and the named.

Why were these 1008 names chosen?

Does the Lord get absolutely defined by these one thousand names? The Vedas affirm that God is neither accessible to words nor to mind. It is said that you cannot comprehend the Paramatma with the human mind alone, even if you spend all your life trying! Given this infinite nature of the Paramatma, who is not governed or constrained by any of the physical laws as we know them, the choice of a thousand names of Vishnu by Bhishma should be recognized as a representation of some of his better known qualities that are repeatedly described in our great epics.

Some might say that they do not understand the meaning of the Sanskrit words, and therefore do not feel comfortable chanting them. But learning the chanting of prayers even without knowing the meaning is a worthwhile act, and can be compared to finding a box of treasure without the key. As long as we have the box, we can open it whenever we get the key of knowledge later. The treasure will be there already.

Others might feel that they do not know the correct Sanskrit pronunciation, and do not want to chant incorrectly. There is an analogy of a mother to whom a child goes and asks for an orange. The child does not know how to pronounce the word “orange” and so asks for “ange”. The mother does not turn away the child and does not refuse to give the child the orange just because the child does not know how to pronounce the word. It is the bhaava (spirit) that matters, and so as long as one chants the name of God with sincerity, considerations such as not knowing the meaning, not knowing the pronunciation, etc, do not matter, and God will confer His blessings on us, there is no way a devotee of Vishnu can meet with any dishonour or disgrace of any kind.

Phala Sruti – The Benefits:

Traditionally our prayers end with a phala sruti – a section on the benefits of reciting the prayer. The Vishnu Sahasranama is no exception.

The necessity of cleansing our body regularly to maintain hygiene and good health is recognized by everyone. But with the busy nature of today’s world, we do not see our mind the same way as we see our body. As a consequence, the need for keeping our minds clean is not appreciated.

Those who do not cleanse their mind on a regular basis become mentally ill over a period of time.. Prayers are a means to mental cleansing when they are chanted with sincerity and devotion. The importance of chanting Sri Vishnu Sahasranama is that the deity being worshipped is none other than Vasudeva. Sri Vedavyasa, who was responsible for stringing the naamas together in a poetic form, points out that it is by the power and command of Vasudeva that the Sun, the Moon, the stars, the world and the oceans are controlled. The whole universe of the Gods, Asuras and Gandharavas is under the sway of Lord Krishna. In Bhishma’s expert

judgement, chanting Vasudevas's name with devotion and sincerity will ensure relief from sorrows and bondage. The person who recites is not the only one who benefits, but also those who for whatever reason are unable to chant benefit by just hearing the chanting as well.

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Ref: Wikipedia

Vishnu Sahasranama

The ***Vishnu Sahasranama***[1] (Sanskrit: विष्णुसहस्रनाम, IAST: *Viṣṇusahasranāma*),[a] is a Sanskrit hymn containing a list of the 1,000 names of Vishnu, one of the main deities in Hinduism and the Supreme God in Vaishnavism. It is one of the most sacred and popular stotras in Hinduism. The most popular version of the *Vishnu Sahasranama* is featured in the Anushasana Parva of the epic *Mahabharata*. Other versions exist in the *Padma Purana*, the *Skanda Purana*, and the *Garuda Purana*. There is also a Sikh version of the *Vishnu Sahasranama* found in the work *Sundar Gutka.*

Background

In the 135th[3] chapter of *Anushāsanaparva* (verses 14 to 120) in Mahabharata, the stotra was given to Yudhishthira by the grandsire of Kuru dynasty and warrior Bhishma who was on his death bed (of arrows) in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Yudhishthira asks Bhishma the following questions:[4][5]

kimekam daivatam loke kim vāpyekam parāyaṇam
stuvantaḥ kam kamarcantaḥ prāpnuyurmānavāḥ śubham
ko dharmaḥ sarva dharmāṇām bhavataḥ paramo mataḥ
kim japan mucyate jantuḥ janmasamsārabandhanāt

In this world Who is the one refuge for all? Who is the greatest Divinity in the world ? By eulogising whom can a person reach auspiciousness? By worshipping whom can a person reach auspiciousness? What is, in your opinion, the greatest Dharma among all the Dharmas? By chanting whose name, can a creature proceed beyond the bonds of samsāra?[6]

Bhishma answers by stating that mankind will be free from all sorrows by chanting the *Vishnu Sahasranama*, which are the thousand names of the all-pervading Supreme Being Vishnu, who is the master of all the worlds, the supreme light, the essence of the universe and who is Brahman. All matter animate and inanimate reside in him, and he in turn resides within all matter.

Etymology

In Sanskrit, *sahasra* means 'thousand'. The meaning of sahasra is situation dependent. *nāma* (nominative, the stem is *nāman-*) means 'name'. The compound is of the Bahuvrihi type and may be translated as 'having a thousand names'. In modern Hindi pronunciation, *nāma* is pronounced [na:m]. It is also pronounced *sahasranāmam* in South India.

The phala shruthi [Phala = results Śruti = that which is heard] says that one who reads this *Vishnu Sahasranamam* every day with full devotion achieves name, fame, wealth and knowledge in his life.[7][8]

Interpretations

The *Vishnu Sahasranama* is popular among Hindus, and a major part of prayer for devout Vaishnavas, or followers of Vishnu. While *Vaishanvas* venerate other deities, they believe that the universe, including the other divinities such as Shiva and Devi, is ultimately a manifestation of the Supreme Vishnu. Despite the existence of other sahasranamas of other gods, referring a sahasranama as "The Sahasranama," generally refers to the *Vishnu Sahasranama* alone, thereby indicating its wide popularity and use.[9]

Two of the names in *Vishnu Sahasranama* that refer to Shiva are "Shiva" (names # 27 and # 600 in Advaitin Adi Shankara's commentary) itself, "Shambhu" (name # 38), "Ishanah" (name #6 4), and "Rudra" (name # 114). Adi Sankara of Advaita Vedanta asserts that the deity Vishnu is Brahman itself (not just an aspect of Brahmam).[10] Again, he notes that "only Hari (Vishnu) is eulogised by names such as *Shiva*",[11] a position consistent with interpretations of the Srivaishnavite commentator Parasara Bhattar. Parasara Bhattar had interpreted Shiva to mean a quality of Vishnu, such as "One who bestows auspiciousness".[12]

However, this interpretation of the name Shiva has been challenged by Swami Tapasyananda's translation of Shankara's commentary on the *Vishnu Sahasranama*.[13] He translates the 27th name, Shiva to mean:"One who is not affected by the three Gunas of Prakrti, Sattva, Rajas,and Tamas; The *Kaivalaya Upanishad* says, "He is both Brahma and Shiva." In the light of this statement of non-difference between Shiva and Vishnu, it is Vishnu Himself Who Is exalted by the praise and worship of Shiva."[13] Based on this commonly held Advaitan point of view which has been adopted by Smartas, Vishnu and Shiva are viewed as one and the same God, being different aspects of preservation and destruction respectively. As many Sanskrit words have multiple meanings, it is possible that both Vishnu and Shiva share names in this instance, e.g., the name Shiva itself means "auspicious"[14] which could also apply to Vishnu. The Deities Ananthapadmanabha and Shankaranarayana are worshipped by Hindus, as is Panduranga Vitthala, a form of Krishna with a Shiva Linga on his crown, signifying the oneness of both deities.

However, the Vaishnava commentator, Parasara Bhattar, a follower of Ramanujacharya has interpreted the names "Shiva" and "Rudra" in *Vishnu Sahasranama* to mean qualities or attributes of Vishnu, and not to indicate that Vishnu and Shiva are one and the same God. Vaishnavas worship Vishnu in his four-armed form, carrying conch, disc, flower and mace in his hands, believing that to be the Supreme form. However, Smarthas do not subscribe to this aspect or personification of God, as Smarthas say that God is Nirguna and thus devoid of form. Additionally, they believe that God is not limited by time nor limited by shape and color. Vaishnava traditions are of the opinion that Vishnu is both unlimited and yet still capable of having specific forms, as to give arguments to the contrary (to say that God is incapable of having a form) is to limit the unlimitable and all-powerful Supreme.

In the Sri Vaishnava and Sadh Vaishnava tradition, the Bhagavad-gita and the *Vishnu Sahasranama* are considered the two eyes of spiritual revelation.

In other Vaishnava traditions too, the *Vishnu Sahasranama* is considered an important text. Within Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Vallabha sampradaya, Nimbarka sampradaya and among Ramanandis, the chanting of the names of Krishna and Rama are considered to be superior to that of Vishnu. Based on another verse in the Padma Purana which says that the benefit of chanting the one thousand names of Vishnu can be derived from chanting one name of Rama, and a verse in the Brahma Vaivarta Purana equating the benefit of chanting three names of Rama with one name of Krishna. However, it is important to realize that those verses in those puranas are not to be interpreted literally, as many believe that there is no difference between Vishnu and Krishna and Rama. This theological difference can be expressed as follows: Many Vaishnava groups recognize Krishna and Rama as an Avatar of Vishnu, while others, instead, consider Him (Krishna) to be svayam bhagavan, or the original form of the Lord. Yet these verses can be interpreted as it is more important to have pure bhakti or devotion than merely repeating the many names of God without emotion. Indeed, Shri Krishna Himself said, "Arjuna, One may be desirous of praising by reciting the thousand names. But, on my part, I feel praised by one shloka. There is no doubt about it." [15]

Within Vaisnavism some groups, such as Sri sampradaya, adhere to and follow the Rig Veda: 1.156.3, which states "O ye who wish to gain realisation of the supreme truth, utter the name of Vishnu at least once in the steadfast faith that it will lead you to such realisation." [16]

Interpretations alluding to the power of God in controlling karma

Many names in the Vishnu Sahasranama, the thousand names of Vishnu allude to the power of God in controlling karma. For example, the 135th name of Vishnu, Dharmadhyaksha, in Sankara's interpretation means, "One who directly sees the merits (Dharma) and demerits (Adharma), of beings by bestowing their due rewards on them."[17]

Other names of Vishnu alluding to this nature of God are Bhavanah, the 32nd name, Vidhata, the 44th name, Apramattah, the 325th name, Sthanadah, the 387th name and Srivibhavanah, the 609th name.[18] Bhavanah, according to Sankara's interpretation, means "One who generates the fruits of Karmas of all Jivas for them to enjoy."[19] The Brahma Sutra (3.2.28) "Phalmatah upapatteh" speaks of the Lord's function as the bestower of the fruits of all actions of the jivas.[19]

General thoughts

Sections from Swami Tapasyananda's translation of the concluding verses of *Vishnu Sahasranama*, state the following: "Nothing *evil or inauspicious* will befall a man here or *hereafter* who daily hears or repeats these names." That comment is noteworthy. King Nahusha, a once righteous king, ancestor of Yudhishthira, after performing a hundred Ashwamedha sacrifices, became king of devas, but was later expelled from Svarga or heaven due to a curse by the great sage Agastya due to his pride and arrogance and became a python for thousands of years.[20] In the commentary to this sloka Sankara states that a fall akin to that of king Nahusha will not happen to that devotee who recites *Vishnu Sahasranama* daily.

Merits of recitation

Believers in the recitation of the *Sahasranama* claim that it brings unwavering calm of mind, complete freedom from stress and brings eternal knowledge. A translation of the concluding verses (Phalasruti) of *Vishnu Sahasranama*, state the following: "Nothing evil or inauspicious will befall a man here or hereafter who daily hears or repeats these names... Whichever devoted man, getting up early in the morning and purifying himself, repeats this hymn devoted to Vasudeva, with a mind that is concentrated on Him, that man attains to great fame, leadership among his peers, wealth that is secure and the supreme good unsurpassed by anything. He will be free from all fears and be endowed with great courage and energy and he will be free from diseases. Beauty of form, strength of body and mind, and virtuous character will be natural to him.... One who reads this hymn every day with devotion and attention attains to peace of mind, patience, prosperity, mental stability, memory and reputation.... Whoever desires advancement and happiness should repeat this devotional hymn on Vishnu composed by Vyasa.... Never will defeat attend on a man who adores the Lotus-Eyed One [Kamala Nayana], who is the Master of all the worlds, who is birthless, and out of whom the worlds have originated and into whom they dissolve."

In orthodox Hindu tradition, a devotee should daily chant the Upanishads, Gita, Rudram, Purusha Sukta and *Vishnu Sahasranama*. If one cannot do all this on any day, it is believed that chanting *Vishnu Sahasranama* alone is sufficient. *Vishnu Sahasranama* can be chanted at any time, irrespective of gender.

Varahi Tantra says that in the age of Kali yuga, most stotras are cursed by Parashurama and hence are ineffective. While listing the ones which are free from this curse and hence suitable during Kali Yuga, it is said, "Gita of the Bhishma Parva, Vishnu Sahasranama of Mahabharata and Chandika Saptashati' (Devi Mahatmyam) are free from all doshas and grant fruits immediately in Kali Yuga." [21]

In a classic astrological text, the Bṛhat Parāśara Horāśāstra, sage Parashara frequently recommends the recitation of the *Vishnu Sahasranama* as the best remedial measure for planetary afflictions.[22] For example, see the following verse: "The most effective and beneficial remedial measure for the prolongation of longevity and to obtain relief from other evil effects is recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam." Ch. 56, verse 30 [22]

Sage Parashara mentions this practice more than ten times in his text as in this further verse:

"The remedial measure to obtain relief from the above evil effects, is the recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama." Ch. 59, verse 77 [22]

In his celebrated Ayurvedic text Charaka Samhita, Acharya Charaka refers to the power of *Vishnu Sahasranama* in curing all kinds of fever.

viṣṇuṁ sahasramūrdhānaṁ carācarapatiṁ vibhum|| 311 stuvannāmasahasrēṇa jvarān sarvānapōhati| Recitation of the sahasra nāma (one thousand names) of Viṡnū, who has one thousand heads, who is the chief of the carācara (moving and non-moving things of the universe) and who is omnipresent cures all type of jwaras.

Shlokas

Recitation and aggregation

An alternative approach is to say the starting prayer, and then say the names collected in stanzas (As they were originally said by Bhishma.) Such stanzas are called *Slokas* in Sanskrit. The Sahasranama (apart from the initial and concluding prayers) has a total of 108 shlokas.

For example, the first *sloka* is:

om visvam vishnur-vashatkaro bhutbhavyabhavatprabhuh

bhutkrd bhutbhrd-bhaavo bhutatma bhutabhavanah

Notice the aggregation of several words and the omission of their intervening spaces. For example, the last word of the first line of this *Sloka*:

bhutabhavya-bhavatprabhuh

corresponds to:

om bhutabhavya bhavat prabhave namah

of the expanded version.

This joining-together of words is a common feature of Sanskrit and is called Samasa- a compound. It makes the *sloka*s compact, and easier to remember.

Mentions, Quotes and Commentaries

Mentions

- Adi Shankara of Advaita Vedanta in Verse 27 of Bhaja Govindam,[27] said that the Gita and Vishnusahasranama should be chanted and the form of the Lord of Lakshmi, Vishnu should always be meditated on. He also said that the Sahasranama bestowed all noble virtues on those who chanted it.[28]
- Parasara Bhattar, a follower of Ramanujacharya had said that Vishnusahasranama absolves people of all sins and has no equal[28]
- Madhvacharya, propounder of Dvaita philosophy, said that the Sahasranama was the essence of the Mahabharata, which in turn was the essence of the Sastras and that each word of the Sahasranama had 100 meanings.[28]
- Swaminarayan, founder of the Hindu Swaminarayan faith, said in verse 118 of the scripture, Shikshapatri, that one should "either recite or have the 10th canto,(of Bhagavata Purana) and also other holy scriptures like the "Vishnusahasranama" recited at a holy place according to one's capacity. "The recital is such that it gives fruits according to whatever is desired."[29]
- Swaminarayan also said in verses 93–96, "I have the highest esteem for these eight holy scriptures: 1-4)the four Vedas, 5) the Vyas-Sutra,(i.e., Brahma Sutras, 6) the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, 7) Shri Vishnusahasranama in the *Mahabharata*, and 8) the Yajnavalkya Smrti which is at the center of the Dharma Scriptures; and all My disciples who wish to prosper should listen to these eight holy scriptures, and the brahmanas under my shelter should learn and teach these holy scriptures, and read them to others."
- Swami Sivananda, in his twenty important spiritual instructions, stated that the Vishnusahasranama, along with other religious texts, should be studied systematically.[30]

Quotes

- Sri N. Krishnamachari, a Vaishnavite scholar, at Stephen Knapp's website, quoting Vaishnavite scholars, states that there are six reasons for the greatness of Vishnusahasranama:
- 1) "Vishnusahasranama is the essence of the Mahabharata;
- 2) Great sages such as Narada, the Alvars, and composers including Saint Tyagaraja have made repeated references to the "Thousand Names of Vishnu" in their devotional works;
- 3) The person who strung together the thousand names as part of the Mahabharata and preserved it for the world was none other than Sage Veda Vyasa, the compiler of the Vedas;
- 4) Bhishma considered chanting of the Vishnusahasranama the best and easiest of all dharmas, or the means to attain relief from all bondage;
- 5) It is widely accepted that the chanting this Stotram gives relief from all sorrows, and leads to happiness and peace of mind;
- 6) Vishnusahasranama is in conformity with the teachings of the Gita."[31]

- Quote by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada; on February 15, 1970, to J.F.Staal; Professor of Philosophy and of South Asian Languages. Second paragraph, states:

In this way we find all the scriptures aiming at the Supreme Person. In the Rig Veda (1.22.20) the *mantra* is *om tad vishnoh paramam padam sada pashyanti surayah* ("The demigods are always looking to that supreme abode of Vishnu"). The whole Vedic process, therefore, is to understand Lord Vishnu, and any scripture is directly or indirectly chanting the glories of the Supreme Lord, Vishnu."[32]

- Shiva addressed his wife, Parvati:

sri rama rama rameti rame rame manorame
sahasranama tat tulyam rama nama varanane

This translates to:

O Varanana (lovely-faced lady), I chant the holy name of Rama, Rama, Rama and thus constantly enjoy this beautiful sound. This holy name of Sri Rama is equal to one thousand holy names of Lord Vishnu." (Brhad Visnusahasranamastotra, Uttara-khanda, Padma Purana 72.335)

- Brahmānda Purana said:

sahasra-namnam punyanam, trir-avrttya tu yat phalam
ekavrttya tu krsnasya, namaikam tat prayacchati

This translates to:

"The pious results (punya) achieved by chanting the thousand holy names of Vishnu (Vishnusahasranama-Stotram) three times can be attained by only one utterance of the holy name of Krishna."

- Krishna Himself said:

yo mam nama sahasrena stotum icchati pandava
sohamekena slokena stuta eva na samsaya

This translates to:

"Arjuna, One may be desirous of praising by reciting the thousand names. But, on my part, I feel praised by one sloka. There is no doubt about it."

- From the oldest scriptural text in Hinduism, the Rig Veda; I.156.3b,[33] it states:

"O ye who wish to gain realisation of the Supreme Truth, utter the name of "Vishnu" at least once in the steadfast faith that it will lead you to such realisation."

Commentaries

The *Vishnu Sahasranama* has been the subject of numerous commentaries:

- Adi Shankara of Advaita Vedanta wrote a definitive commentary on the *Sahasranama* in the 8th century.
- Parasara Bhattar, a follower of Ramanuja, wrote a commentary in the 12th century, detailing the names of Vishnu from a Vishishtadvaita perspective, in the book titled *Bhagavath Guna Dharpanam* (or *Bhagavad Guna Dharpana*, meaning *reflections of the Lord's qualities*).[34][35]
- Madhvacharya of Dvaita Vedanta asserted that each name in the sahasranama has a minimum of 100 meanings.
- Vidyadhiraja Tirtha (died 1392) (disciple of Jayatirtha) of Dvaita Vedanta wrote a commentary on *Vishnu Sahasranama* called *Viṣṇusahasranāmavivṛti*.[36]
- Satyanidhi Tirtha (died 1660) of Dvaita Vedanta wrote *Vishnu Sahasranama Vyakhyana*, a commentary on *Vishnu Sahasranama*.[37]
- Satyasandha Tirtha (died 1794) of Dvaita Vedanta wrote *Viṣṇusahasranāmabhāṣya*, a commentary on *Vishnu Sahasranama*.

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YouTube Videos

Vishnu Sahasranamam by M S Subbulakshmi (29 min):

https://youtu.be/ATfIA6WOy0I?si=vhwK0VRdS1AXF2uG

Vishnu Sahasranamam by Rajalaksmee Sanjay (31 min):

https://youtu.be/h85b85vNSnc?si=CKapaB5aojD-1a2E

Vishnu Sahasranamam by Shemaroo Bhakti (29 min):

https://youtu.be/SHjcWy_tf6g?si=KiraAuX9PsvvOegT

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ॐ सह नाऽवतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥ **(3)**
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